

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the rejections set forth in the Office action dated 3/10/2005 is respectfully requested under the provisions of 37 CFR §1.111(b).

Applicant petitions for a one month extension of time and authorizes payment of the fee below and/or in papers filed previously or herewith.

Claims 1-50 have been rejected.

Claim 17 has been canceled.

New claim 51 has been added.

Claims 1-16, and 18-51 are pending.

Claims 2-16, 18-25, and 27-50 were amended to replace the "C" of "Claim" with "c" thus resulting in "claim". Many of the remaining dependent claims were also amended to place a "," after the identification of the parent claim. Applicant asserts that these amendments are simply matter of form and have no relevance to patentability.

Claims 1 and 26 were amended to clarify that a thrask comprises a collection that associates a plurality of information items and that that collection has the capability of associating a document information item with a message information item. These limitations are described at page 5, lines 17-18 ("thrask refers to a collection of related items"); where the related items include documents -- described at page 4, lines 12-13:

"'document' is used to denote any information item that is not a message" and messages -- described at page 4, lines 14-19

"'message' is defined as a finite unit of communication ... that can be sent (in one transmission action, as opposed to streamed continuously) through a network from a sender to one or more recipients (where the recipient may be the sender). The communication is usually text but may include video or audio. The communication may also include entire files (such as email attachments)."

Documents and messages in a thrask are on the same level (page 10, lines 22-23) and associated by the thrask (page 10, line 29 through page 11, line 2). Claims 1 and 26 were also amended to more clearly claim that the criterion for sorting is responsive to metadata in the thrask.

Claims 2, 4-10, 13-16, 18-25, 27, 29-35, and 38-50 have been amended to be consistent with their respective parent claims and/or for clarity.

The following claim dependencies have changed:

- Claim 5 has been amended to depend from claim 1.
- Claim 8 has been amended to depend from claim 6.
- Claim 9 has been amended to depend from claim 8.
- Claim 10 has been amended to depend from claim 1.
- Claim 19 has been amended to depend from claim 1.
- Claim 25 has been amended to depend from claim 1.
- Claim 30 has been amended to depend from claim 26.
- Claim 33 has been amended to depend from claim 31.
- Claim 34 has been amended to depend from claim 33.
- Claim 35 has been amended to depend from claim 26.
- Claim 44 has been amended to depend from claim 26.
- Claim 50 has been amended to depend from claim 26.

Applicant asserts that these amendments were not made to overcome any prior art but were made to further clarify the claimed subject matter.

The specification was amended to correct one or more typographical errors. The paragraph starting at page 19, line 18 corrected reference number and added an omitted reference number. The paragraph starting at page 31, line 19 corrected two reference numbers. Applicant asserts that no new matter was added by these amendments.

The drawings were amended to correct spelling and reference numerals. Applicant asserts that no new matter was added by these amendments.

I. Double Patenting

Claims 1 and 26 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 26 of copending application no. 10/046,409 (attorney docket number A1490Q1-US-NP).

Applicant will delay responding to this rejection until either 10/046,409 or the instant application is in condition for allowance as the respective claims may sufficiently change during prosecution to make the rejection moot.

II. Rejections under 35 USC §112

Claims 1-50 stand rejected as being indefinite because of the term “thrask”.

Claims 1 and 26 were amended to clarify that a thrask comprises a collection that associates a plurality of information items and that that collection has the capability of associating a document information item with a message information item. These limitations are described at page 5, lines 17-18 (“thrask refers to a collection of related items”); where the related items include documents -- described at page 4, lines 12-13:

“‘document’ is used to denote any information item that is not a message”
and messages -- described at page 4, lines 14-19

“ ‘message’ is defined as a finite unit of communication ... that can be sent (in one transmission action, as opposed to streamed continuously) through a network from a sender to one or more recipients (where the recipient may be the sender). The communication is usually text but may include video or audio. The communication may also include entire files (such as email attachments).”

Documents and messages in a thrask are on the same level (page 10, lines 22-23) and associated by the thrask (page 10, line 29 through page 11, line 2). Claims 1 and 26 were also amended to more clearly claim that the criterion for sorting is responsive to metadata in the thrask.

III. Rejections under 35 USC §102(e)

Claims 1-50 stand rejected as being anticipated by Chandra (2002/0128583).

A prima facie case of anticipation is established when the Examiner provides a single reference that teaches or enables each of the claimed elements (arranged as in the claim) expressly or inherently as interpreted by one of ordinary skill in the art.

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection to the claims as a prima facie case has not been established.

A thrask is different than an e-mail thread or a personal organizer task. For this aspect of the invention a thrask is a collection of document information items and message information items that are on the same level (for example e-mail messages that originally contained an attached document have the attached document placed at the same level as the e-mail message (thus, a user need not first open the e-mail message to access the document)). Information items can be manually entered into the thrask or automatically entered into the thrask. Reminders, deadlines, obligation information, etc. can be associated with the information item(s) in the thrask. Thrasks allow a multiple party workflow system that does not use a single centralized system or workflow schema (page 2, lines 21-23).

Currently amended claim 1 is directed to:

A method for managing and tracking information items within a message-based system on a user system, the message-based system having a viewer, the method comprising the operations of:

- (a) generating a thrask, the thrask comprising a collection that associates a plurality of information items, at least one information item in the plurality of information items having a first set of metadata, the collection capable of associating a document information item and a message information item;
- (b) sorting a new information item into the thrask in accordance with at least one criterion responsive to the first set of metadata, the new information item having a second set of metadata; and
- (c) displaying, in the viewer, the thrask and at least one displayed metadataum selected from the first set of metadata or the second set of metadata.

Chandra uses transportable applications to create a shared workspace that aggregates dynamic content and within which multiple entities can interact with that dynamic content (Chandra [0038]). The transportable application obtains content from a server source (Chandra [0180], fig. 2a, 202, [0200], [0237]-[0238] re dynamic content). Chandra's transportable applications allow a networked user to access current information stored at the server such that each user remote from the server can read up-to-date information from the server through the use of the transportable application. Thus, any access, by any entity, of the transportable application will access the server to display the current information. Thus, for example, the entity need not unwind a thread of e-mails.

Looking now to currently amended claim 1:

A method for managing and tracking information items within a message-based system on a user system, the message-based system having a viewer, the method comprising the operations of:

The preamble of currently amended claim 1 includes terminology that limits the method to use within "a message-based system on a user system" ("message-based system" is defined at page 4, lines 25-29) and thus is not directed to any multiple party workflow system that uses a single centralized system or workflow schema (page 2, lines 21-23). Chandra uses a server source and thus does not teach or enable a message-based system on a user system.

With regard to operation (a):

- (a) generating a thrask, the thrask comprising a collection that associates a plurality of information items, at least one information item in the plurality of information items having a first set of metadata, the collection capable of associating a document information item and a message information item;

Chandra [0292]- [0294] references Chandra Fig 1D that illustrates an interaction of a transportable application with system services. Nothing related to Chandra [0292]-[0294] teach anything about a thrask or the operation of generating a thrask.

With regard to operation (b):

- (b) sorting a new information item into the thrask in accordance with at least one criterion responsive to the first set of metadata, the new information item having a second set of metadata;

Chandra [0025] teaches general web concepts, [0027] teaches e-mail threads, [0342] teaches separation of transportable application building blocks from a database schema, [0359] teaches providing a notification when a new or updated transportable application is received or when the status of a transportable application changes. None of these references teach anything about sorting new information into a thrask in a message-based system.

With regard to operation (c):

- (c) displaying, in the viewer, the thrask and at least one displayed metadataum selected from the first set of metadata or the second set of metadata.

Chandra [0019], [0708]-[0711]; "window 2100", "header display 2102", "message body display pane 2104" teach a user interface for processing e-mail. Chandra does not teach a thrask and so does not teach displaying the thrask.

Chandra does not anticipate currently amended claim 1 because Chandra does not teach or enable each of the claimed elements (arranged as in the claim) expressly or inherently as interpreted by one of ordinary skill in the art. Currently amended claim 26 is directed toward a system that performs the operations of Currently amended claim 1. The discussion as applied to currently amended claim 1 also applies to currently amended claim 26. Thus, applicant requests reconsideration of the anticipation rejection of currently amended claims 1 and 26 in light of the amendments and discussion above.

Dependent claims 2-16, 18-25, 27-50 depend on and further limit their respective, currently amended, claims that are not anticipated. Thus claims 2-16, 18-25, 27-50 are not anticipated.

PATENT

Since all rejections, objections and requirements contained in the outstanding official action have been fully answered or traversed and shown to be inapplicable to the present claims, it is respectfully submitted that reconsideration is now in order under the provisions of 37 CFR §1.111(b) and such reconsideration is respectfully requested. Upon reconsideration, it is also respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is therefore respectfully requested.

The undersigned Xerox Corporation attorney hereby authorizes the charging of any necessary fees, other than the issue fee, to Xerox Corporation Deposit Account No. 24-0025. This also constitutes a request for any needed extension of time and authorization to charge all fees therefor to Xerox Corporation Deposit Account No. 24-0025.

Should any additional issues remain, or if I can be of any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (650) 812-4259.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix A

Current Claims in Clean Form provided as a Convenience for the Examiner.

The following is a listing of the claims after all amendments have been incorporated. Due to the extensive claim amendments applicant believes the Examiner may find it convenient to review this claim list while understanding that the officially amended claims have been previously provided within the claim section.

- 1.(currently amended) A method for managing and tracking information items within a message-based system on a user system, the message-based system having a viewer, the method comprising the operations of:
 - (a) generating a thrask, the thrask comprising a collection that associates a plurality of information items, at least one information item in the plurality of information items having a first set of metadata, the collection capable of associating a document information item and a message information item;
 - (b) sorting a new information item into the thrask in accordance with at least one criterion responsive to the first set of metadata, the new information item having a second set of metadata; and
 - (c) displaying, in the viewer, the thrask and at least one displayed metadataum selected from the first set of metadata or the second set of metadata.
- 2.(currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the operation of:
 - (d) updating at least one of the metadata in the first set of metadata.
- 3.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein operations (a), (b) and (c) are embedded in the message-based system.
- 4.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the new information item is a new message.

- 5.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the new information item is a new document, and wherein the new document is attached to a new message, is stored on the user system or is accessible by the user system over a network.
- 6.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the first set of metadata comprises task-related information.
- 7.(currently amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the task-related information comprises a deadline.
- 8.(currently amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the task-related information comprises a specified date and wherein operation (c) further comprises displaying a notification when the specified date arrives.
- 9.(currently amended) The method of claim 8, wherein operation (c) further comprises displaying a dialog box configured to receive a response.
- 10.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the first set of metadata includes a first specified date, the second set of metadata includes a second specified date, and wherein operation (c) further comprises determining a nearest specified date responsive to the first and second specified dates, and displaying an indicator responsive to the nearest specified date.
- 11.(currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the indicator changes in appearance as the nearest specified date gets closer.
- 12.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein operation (a) is performed in response to a user action performed on an information item.

- 13.(currently amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the viewer includes a thrask-viewing pane and wherein the user action comprises the action of manually dragging the at least one information item into the thrask-viewing pane.
- 14.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein operation (a) comprises automatically generating a new thrask when a predetermined criterion is satisfied.
- 15.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the new information item is a new message, the at least one information item is a prior message, and the at least one criterion is that the new message is a response to the prior message.
- 16.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein operation (b) is performed in response to a user action, the user action including the action of manually dragging the new information item into a visual display of the thrask.
- 17.(Canceled)
- 18.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the viewer comprises a thrask-viewing pane and an item list pane, and wherein operation (c) further comprises displaying the thrask in the thrask-viewing pane and displaying the at least one displayed metadataum in the item list pane.
- 19.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the viewer further comprises a content viewing pane and wherein operation (c) further comprises displaying in the content viewing pane the content of one of the plurality of information items.
- 20.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein operation (c) further comprises displaying a mark indicating an obligation associated with one of the plurality of information items.

- 21.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein operation (c) further comprises displaying a group of marks indicating obligations associated with the thrask, the group of marks corresponding to two or more of the plurality of information items.
- 22.(currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein, a first subset of the group of marks represent obligations of a user and a second subset of the group of marks represent obligations of correspondents of the user.
- 23.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the first set of metadata includes one or more of a "From:" entry, a "To:" entry and a "Cc:" entry, and wherein operation (c) further comprises displaying, one or more names that appear in any of the "From:" entry, the "To:" entry or the "Cc:" entry.
- 24.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein displaying the thrask is responsive to a display condition and wherein operation (c) further comprises determining the thrask display condition responsive to a user-specified date and a deferral option.
- 25.(currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein operation (c) further comprises:
- determining an information item display condition responsive to a user-specified date and a deferral option; and
 - displaying the at least one displayed metadataum responsive to the information item display condition.
- 26.(currently amended) A system for managing and tracking information items within a message-based system on a user system, the message-based system including a viewer, the system comprising:

- (a) a thrask generating module configured to generate a thrask, the thrask comprising a collection that associates a plurality of information items, at least one information item in the plurality of information items having a first set of metadata, the collection capable of associating a document information item and a message information item;
- (b) a sorting module configured to sort a new information item into the thrask in accordance with at least one criterion responsive to the first set of metadata, the new information item having a second set of metadata; and
- (c) a display module configured to display the thrask and at least one displayed metadataum selected from the first set of metadata or the second set of metadata.

27.(currently amended) The system of claim 26 further comprising:

- (d) an updating module configured to update at least one of the metadata in the first set of metadata.

28.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the thrask-generating module, the sorting modules and the display module are embedded in the message-based system.

29.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the new information is a new message.

30.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the new information item is a new document, and wherein the new document is attached to a new message, is stored on the user system or is accessible by the user system over a network.

31.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the first set of metadata comprises task-related information.

- 32.(currently amended) The system of claim 31, wherein the task-related information comprise a deadline.
- 33.(currently amended) The system of claim 31, wherein the task-related information comprises a specified date, and wherein the display module is configured to display a notification when the specified date arrives.
- 34.(currently amended) The system of claim 33, wherein the display module is configured to display a dialog box configured to receive a response.
- 35.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the first set of metadata includes a first specified date, the second set of metadata includes a second specified date, and wherein the display module further comprises a date-comparison module configured to determine a nearest specified date from the first and second specified dates, the display module configured to display an indicator responsive to the nearest specified date.
- 36.(currently amended) The system of claim 35, wherein the indicator changes in appearance as the nearest specified date gets closer.
- 37.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the thrask-generating module activates in response to a user action performed on an information item.
- 38.(currently amended) The system of claim 37, wherein the viewer includes a thrask-viewing pane and wherein the user action comprises the action of manually dragging the at least one information item into the thrask-viewing pane.
- 39.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the thrask-generating module is configured to automatically generate a new thrask when a predetermined criterion is satisfied.

- 40.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the new information item is a new message, the at least one information item is a prior message, and the at least one criterion is that the new message is a response to the prior message.
- 41.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the sorting module activates in response to a user action, the user action including the action of manually dragging the new information item into a visual display of the thrask.
- 42.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the sorting module is further configured to provide a suggestion that the new information item be sorted into the thrask.
- 43.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the viewer comprises a thrask-viewing pane and an item list pane, and wherein the display module is further configured to display the thrask in the thrask-viewing pane and to display the at least one displayed metadataum in the item list pane.
- 44.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the viewer further comprises a content viewing pane and wherein the display module is configured to display in the content viewing pane the content of one of the plurality of information items.
- 45.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the display module is further configured to display a mark to indicate an obligation associated with one of the plurality of information items.
- 46.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the display module displays a group of marks indicating obligations associated with the thrask, the obligations being user-defined, the marks corresponding to some of the information items included in the thrask.

- 47.(currently amended) The system of claim 46, wherein, a first subset of the group of marks represent obligations of a user and a second subset of the group of marks represent obligations of correspondents of the user.
- 48.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the first set of metadata includes one or more of a "From:" entry, a "To:" entry and a "Cc:" entry, and wherein the display module is further configured to display one or more names that appear in any of the "From:" entry, the "To:" entry or the "Cc:" entry.
- 49.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the display module is responsive to a display condition and further comprises a deferral module configured to determine the display condition responsive to a user-specified date and a deferral option.
- 50.(currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the display module is configured to condition display of the at least one displayed metadataum responsive to an information item display condition and further comprises a deferral module configured to determine the information item display condition responsive to a user specified date and a deferral option.
- 51.(new) The method of claim 6, wherein the task-related information comprises a reminder.

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figs. 2, 4, 6, 14, and 18. These changes are on replacement sheets 2/18, 4/18, 6/18, 13/18 and 17/18 respectively. These changes are spelling corrections in Figs. 2, 4, and 6 and numbering corrections in Figs. 14 and 18. In Fig. 14, reference 1422 was changed to 1421 and reference 1422 was changed to 1421 and missing reference 1420 was added. No new matter was added. Omitted reference numbers 1802, 1804, 1806, and 1808 were added to Fig. 18.

Formal Drawings are also included for sheets 1/18, 3/18, 5/18, 7/18, 8/18, 9/18, 10/18, 11/18, 12/18, 14/18, 15/18, 16/18, and 18/18.

Attachment after Appendix A: Replacement Sheets and Formal Drawings